

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 143

Introduced by Assembly Member Bigelow
(Coauthor: Senator Berryhill)

May 5, 2014

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 143—Relative to the Buffalo Soldiers.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 143, as introduced, Bigelow. Buffalo Soldiers: Yosemite National Park.

This measure would recognize the legacy of the Buffalo Soldiers and would honor the important role they played in the history of our national parks.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, In 1866, Congress created six segregated regiments
2 that were ultimately consolidated into four Black regiments: the
3 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 24th and 25th Infantry; and
4 WHEREAS, African American army regiments that had been
5 dispatched westward fought in the Indian Wars and these soldiers
6 were eventually given the name Buffalo Soldiers by the Cheyenne
7 and other Plains Indians; and
8 WHEREAS, Although historians have recorded the service of
9 these Buffalo Soldiers on the western frontier, their service in some
10 national parks has been nearly forgotten; and
11 WHEREAS, The United States Army served as the official
12 administrator of Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks between

1 1891 and 1913. In that capacity, it helped create a model for park
2 management as we know it today; and

3 WHEREAS, Buffalo Soldiers were among the first park rangers
4 and backcountry rangers patrolling parts of the west; and

5 WHEREAS, Approximately 500 Buffalo Soldiers, mainly from
6 the 24th Infantry and 9th Cavalry, served in Yosemite National
7 Park and Sequoia National Park. Their duties ranged from evicting
8 poachers and timber thieves to extinguishing forest fires. They
9 also oversaw the construction of roads, trails, and other
10 infrastructure; and

11 WHEREAS, Commanding officers of the United States Army
12 became acting military superintendents for these national parks
13 with two troops of cavalry assigned to each park. Each troop would
14 be made up of approximately 60 men; and

15 WHEREAS, The presence of these troops invigorated the local
16 economy and the soldiers acting as official stewards of park lands
17 brought a sense of law and order to the mountain wilderness; and

18 WHEREAS, Among their many accomplishments, the troops
19 assigned to Yosemite National Park oversaw the building of an
20 arboretum near the south fork of the Merced River in 1904. One
21 scholar considered the area to contain the first marked nature trail
22 in the United States' national park system; now, therefore, be it

23 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
24 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature recognizes the legacy of
25 the Buffalo Soldiers and honors the important role they played in
26 the history of our national parks; and be it further

27 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
28 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.